



FIRST THINGS FIRST

The right system for bright futures

**Arizona Early Childhood Development & Health
Pinal Regional Partnership Council
Governance Policy Manual**

PREFACE

This document, initially adopted by the Pinal Regional Partnership Council on July 9, 2008, and updated periodically thereafter, constitutes the complete and official body of policies for the governance and operation of the Pinal Regional Partnership Council.

DISCLAIMER

ALL POLICIES FOUND IN THIS GOVERNANCE POLICY MANUAL ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE FROM TIME TO TIME AS APPROVED BY THE REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL. THE FIRST THINGS FIRST REGIONAL OFFICE DISSEMINATES HARD COPIES OF ADDITIONS/REVISIONS NOT MORE THAN TWICE EACH YEAR. THE WEB COPY, LOCATED AT [HTTP://WWW.AZECDH.GOV](http://www.azecdh.gov) IS UPDATED AS NEEDED FOLLOWING APPROVAL BY THE REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL. PRIOR TO ACTING IN RELIANCE UPON A SPECIFIC COUNCIL POLICY AS IT APPEARS IN ANY COPY OF THE GOVERNANCE POLICY MANUAL, PLEASE CHECK TO MAKE SURE THAT THE COUNCIL HAS NOT RECENTLY APPROVED ANY ADDITIONS OR REVISIONS TO THAT SPECIFIC POLICY.

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1-101 Organization, Authority and Location

The Pinal Regional Partnership Council (herein “the Council”) is established as a result of a ballot initiative, Proposition 203, which was approved by voters in November 2006. The purpose, authority, powers and duties of the Council are included in A.R.S. Title 8, Chapter 13 as well as in other statutes and laws of the State of Arizona. The Council is appointed by the Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board and assisted in the performance of its duties by staff employees known as the First Things First Staff. The Pinal Regional Office is located at 1515 East Florence Blvd. Suite 110 Casa Grande, Arizona 85222. The office is maintained by the Regional Staff.

1-102 Departure from Council Policy

- A. Persons desiring to depart from the policies adopted by the Council shall submit a request in writing to the Chairperson of the Council.
- B. No departure from Council policy shall be permitted without the approval of the Council.

1-103 Meetings of the Council

The Council shall adopt a calendar of regular meetings of the Council prior to the beginning of each fiscal year. The Chairperson or any four members of the Council may at any time call a special meeting of the Council.

A majority of the membership of the Council shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Council, but a number less than a quorum may adjourn from time to time. Council members may participate at any meeting in person, by teleconference and/or by videoconference provided that all members may hear one another.

Public notice of all meetings of the Council shall be provided in accordance with the requirements of law. In addition, written notice shall be provided to each member of the Council. All notices required by this policy shall at least specify the time, date and place of the meeting.

Written notice of any regular meeting of the Council, plus the agenda and all material relating to agenda items, shall be transmitted to each member of the Council at each member’s last known place of residence or other designated address by the quickest and most reliable method at least ten days prior to the date of such meeting. Amendments to the agenda and additional supporting materials, not previously available, shall be transmitted at least three days prior to the scheduled meeting. Except with the approval of three-fourths of the voting members in attendance at a meeting, and if permitted by law, no action shall be taken by the Council on any matter where material is not timely submitted in accordance with this policy. E-mail may be used to transmit the above documents unless a Council Member requests in writing to receive a copy by mail at least ten days prior to the meeting.

Special meetings may be held upon such notice to the members of the Council as is appropriate to the

circumstances and upon such public notice as is required by law. Special meetings may be held by teleconference and/or videoconference. All material relating to special meeting agenda items shall be transmitted to each member of the Council as far in advance of the meeting as possible.

1-104 Meeting Procedures

Meetings of the Council shall be conducted by the Chairperson or the Vice Chairperson acting as Chairperson of the Council. The Chairperson of the Council is responsible for maintaining order in each Council meeting and giving each member of the Council a fair opportunity to participate in the discussion and resolution of issues that come before it. The Council Chairperson is also responsible for determining the manner of any public participation and for maintaining order during public participation in any Council meetings.

All Council committee meetings shall be conducted by the chairperson of the committee or the committee chairperson's designee. The chairperson of each committee has the same responsibilities for each committee meeting that the Chairperson has for Council meetings.

In determining what procedures to use to conduct meetings and resolve issues, the Council Chairperson and committee chairpersons may refer to Robert's Rules of Order or a similar text of rules for the fair conduct of meetings for guidance."

The order of business for any regular meeting of the Council shall be in accordance with the written agenda prepared for the meeting. Such agenda shall provide for both an executive session and open session in accordance with requirements of law. The open session portion of the agenda shall provide at least for the following:

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call of Members Present
3. Adoption of all Consent Agenda Items
4. Approval of Minutes of prior regular or special meetings if not included on consent agenda
5. Office Report from the First Things First Regional Coordinator
6. Reports, if any, from ad hoc or special committees appointed by the Council
 - a. State Report
 - b. Regional Report
 - c. Finance Report
7. Special orders --- Important business previously designated for consideration at this meeting
8. Unfinished business
9. New business
10. Call to the public
11. Announcements
12. Adjournment

Routine matters listed in the open session portion of the agenda for a regular meeting of the Council may be grouped together and decided by the Council without discussion or debate. Such matters shall be designated as "Consent Agenda Items." Any member of the Council may request discussion or

debate on any individual item listed as a Consent Agenda Item, and the matter shall be considered and decided separately at such time in the meeting as may be directed by the Chairperson.

During the course of any regular meeting of the Council, the Chairperson shall act as presiding officer and all motions shall be directed to the Chairperson. However, the Chairperson may delegate to the chair of each respective standing committee the responsibility for chairing discussion of items presented to the Council by that chairperson. Whenever a matter before the Council is deferred for further discussion, the Chairperson may assign the matter to an appropriate committee, schedule the matter for further consideration at a future meeting of the Council, or take other appropriate action, and may otherwise direct the Regional Staff with respect to the matter.

All meetings of the Council are open to the public except for executive sessions. The Council reserves the right, however, to maintain order to prevent interference by any member or members of the public with the conduct of its meetings.

1-105 Call to the Public Procedure

During each Council meeting, the Council conducts a “Call to the Public” when members of the public may address the Council. Speakers who wish to address the Council:

- Must turn in a signed request (using the form provided at the Council meeting) to the Regional Coordinator. Any written materials for the Council should be included with this request.
- Are given up to five minutes to make their remarks.

The following priority will be given to speakers during “Call to the Public”:

1. Matters scheduled on the same meeting’s agenda.
2. Other matters; presenters who haven’t address the Council in the previous two months.
3. Other matters: presenters who have addressed the Council in the previous two months.

The Council retains its prerogative to:

- Refuse to hear comments on a specific issue if a public comment session has been held on the issue.
- Limit the time or the number of speakers on the same issue.
- Refuse to have letters read *on behalf of other individuals*.

If speakers have comments that are too long for the time allowed, or if members of the public would like materials distributed to the Council, written materials may be provided to the Regional Coordinator. All written materials are distributed to and given consideration by the Council.

Because of the diversity of issues presented during “Call to the Public,” Council members generally do not respond to speakers during this comment period. The speaker’s concerns are recorded and may be referred to the appropriate staff for follow-up. The Council is informed of the outcomes of the staff efforts to respond to the speaker’s concerns.

1-106 Minutes of Meetings of the Council

Minutes of all meetings of the Council shall be created and maintained in accordance with the requirements of law. The Council may incorporate by reference into its minutes lists of staff changes, reports, lists of budget information, formal written resolutions and other material of similar import, and such material shall be maintained in a permanent file to be designated as the "Pinal Regional Partnership Council's Documents File," which shall be kept in the custody of the Regional Coordinator and available for ready reference.

Each member of the Council shall be furnished with copies of the minutes of the open session portion of each regular and special meeting of the Council. Members of the Council shall be furnished with copies of the minutes of the executive session portion of any meeting of the Council for the purpose of approving those minutes, after which all copies shall be returned to the Regional Coordinator.

All minutes of the open session portion of any meeting of the Council shall be open to public inspection during regular business hours at the First Things First Regional Office located in Casa Grande, AZ. Minutes of executive sessions shall be kept confidential except from members of the Council or as otherwise required by law. Copies of minutes or excerpts from any minutes of the open session portion of any Council meeting or from any executive session, if the law permits such disclosure, may be furnished by the Regional Coordinator. If such minutes have not yet been approved by the Council, they shall be marked "Draft."

1-107 Committees and Subcommittees

The Council may establish and maintain standing committees composed of members of the Council appointed by the Chairperson. The Chairperson will serve as an ex officio member of all standing committees.

Standing Committees may meet either apart from regular meetings of the Council and provide a report to the Council of business conducted, or may meet as a committee of the whole during the course of a regular Council meeting. All members of the Council attending a standing committee meeting are eligible for voting on standing committee matters.

The Chairperson of the Council may establish such other ad hoc or special committees as the Chairperson deems necessary or advisable. The Chairperson shall appoint the membership of such committees, which may, but need not, include members of the Council, and shall designate the matters to be considered by said committees. All such committees shall act as advisory bodies to the Council and report their recommendations to the Council.

All such standing, ad hoc or special committees shall hold and conduct their meetings in accordance with requirements of law. The chair of each such committee shall be its presiding officer and shall set the time, date and place of the meetings.

The Executive Committee shall be a standing committee of the Council. Its members shall include the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson and the chairs of any other Standing Committees established by the Council. Unless otherwise directed by the Chairperson will preside of the Executive Committee. If the law permits, the Council may delegate a specific decision-making authority to the Executive Committee from time to time. In addition, if a matter is deemed to be urgent by the Chairperson, the Executive Committee may be convened for specific decision-making, subject to adoption at a subsequent regular meeting of the Council.

1-108 Council Officers and Their Duties

At the first regular meeting of the Council following May 1 of each fiscal year beginning in 2008, the Council shall elect a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson from among the appointed members to serve for the ensuing fiscal year beginning July 1, who shall hold office for twelve months and until successors are duly elected. The election shall be by ballot.

In the absence of good reason to the contrary, it shall be the Policy of the Council, in nominating members to serve as its Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, to nominate members who have previously served as a member of the executive committee to help ensure greater past experience on the Council. Notwithstanding the previously stated preference for experience, the Council may nominate any appointed member for its Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson. A majority vote of the appointed members of the Council shall be required to elect.

It shall be the duty of the Chairperson to preside over the meetings of the Council, to call meetings as herein provided, to serve as an ex officio member of all committees of the Council, and to perform such other duties as are set forth in these policies or as shall be vested in the Chairperson.

It shall be the duty of the Vice-Chairperson to assume the duties of the Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson. The Vice-Chairperson does not automatically succeed the Chairperson. Both the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson are eligible for reelection.

1-109 Communications To or From the Council

Communications from the Council to members of the legislature, the press and the public should, whenever possible, be transmitted by and through the Chairperson of the Council. Inquiries in regard to matters upon which the Council has taken, or probably will take a position, should be referred to the Chairperson.

There will be cases when an individual member of the Council will feel obligated to answer inquiries. In these cases, the member of the Council expressing an opinion as to matters upon which the Council has taken a position should support the position taken by the Council or make it perfectly clear that he or she is expressing an opinion that has not been approved by the Council.

1-110 Lobbying

The Council recognizes and appreciates the privilege each individual in this State and nation has to express his or her opinion and to seek to make that opinion known to members of Congress, and State legislature. The Council also recognizes the responsibilities with which it has been entrusted in connection with the operation of the early childhood development and health system and the advancement of early childhood development and health programs in the State of Arizona and recognizes that on occasion the interests of the Council will not coincide with the interests of individual members of the Council.

In approaching members of the State legislature or members of Congress, members of the Council shall make every effort to indicate clearly that the position they take is an individual position or is the position of a group other than the Council. In instances in which the Council has taken an official position, the member endorsing a differing position shall make it clear to the legislative body that the Council has endorsed a different or contrary position.

The members responsible for the disbursement or allocation of State funds shall determine prior to disbursement or allocation that such funds will not be used for purposes of influencing legislation unless such use receives specific authorization by the Council.

Only the Chairperson of the Council or his or her designated delegate shall speak for the Council to members of the legislature in matters relating to policy. In responding to members of congress or State legislators, Council members shall make every effort to accurately communicate official Council positions. In matters for which the Council hasn't taken an official position, Council members should indicate clearly that the position they take is an individual position or is the position of a group other than the Council.

This policy is not intended to nor shall it be enforced so as to restrict rights guaranteed to individual employees or Council members but is an attempt only to separate the views of those individuals from positions which the Council may take in attempting to discharge its responsibilities under the statutes of the State of Arizona.

1-111 Conflicts Of Interest

Council members and employees shall comply with the conflict of interest provisions of A.R.S. Title 38, Chapter 3, Article 8. These statutes set the minimum standards expected of public officers and employees who, in their official capacities, are faced with a decision or contract that might affect their direct or indirect pecuniary or proprietary interests or those of a relative. Section 38-503 provides in part:

Any public officer or employee of a public agency who has, or whose relative has, a substantial interest in any contract, sale, purchase or service to such public agency shall make known that interest in the

official records of such public agency and shall refrain from voting upon or otherwise participating in any manner as an officer or employee in such contract, sale, purchase or service.

Any public officer or employee who has, or whose relative has, a substantial interest in any decision of a public agency shall make known such interest in the official records of such public agency and shall refrain from participating in any manner as an officer or employee in such decision.

Under this law, a Council member or employee who has a conflict of interest must disclose the interest and refrain from participating in the matter. Council members and employees may find guidance on this subject in the Arizona Agency Handbook, which is available on the Attorney General's website at http://www.azag.gov/Agency_Handbook/Agency_Handbook.html. Public officers and employees should review conflicts of interest matters not specifically addressed in the Handbook with their supervisors or legal counsel.

In addition to complying with the conflict of interest provisions of Title 38, Chapter 3, Article 8, no Regional Partnership Council member shall vote on, or participate in the discussion of, any grant proposal in which any entity by which they are employed or on whose Council they serve has a substantial interest, as defined by Section 38-502.

Furthermore, in accordance with A.R.S. Section 8-1191(C)(5), Council members are specifically prohibited from having a substantial interest in the provision of early childhood education services as defined by Section 38-502.

In addition to complying with the conflict of interest provisions of Title 38, Chapter 3, Article 8, all Council members and employees shall complete a Conflict of Interest Statement upon adoption of this policy and annually thereafter on a form to be provided by the central office staff. These forms will be reviewed by the First Things First Executive Director and legal counsel for resolution or mitigation of potential conflicts of interest. Any potential conflicts of interest that cannot be resolved or mitigated satisfactorily will be placed on the Early Childhood Development and Health Board's upcoming agenda for disclosure purposes and to help ensure compliance with the conflict of interest laws. In addition, the Executive Director will prepare a summary report of the Conflict of Interest Statements filed each year for Council review.

The Conflict of Interest Statement prepared annually by the Executive Director will be reviewed by the Council.

1-112 Code of Ethics

Voting members and staff will agree to the following code of ethics:

- Listen carefully to fellow Council members.
- Respect the opinions of fellow Council members.
- Respect and support the majority decisions of the Council.
- Recognize that all authority is vested in the full Council only when it meets in a legal public session.
- Keep well informed about the issues which could come before the Council.

- Participate actively in Council meetings and actions.
- Bring to the attention of the Council any issues that could have an adverse effect on the Pinal Regional Partnership Council, First Things First, and the Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board.
- Refer complaints concerning Council related matters and members to the proper level, specifically the chair or vice chair of the Council. Represent all the people the Pinal Regional Partnership Council serves and not primarily a particular issue, personal agenda, or interest group.
- If there is a violation of this code the individual(s) suspected of said violation shall meet with the chair or vice chair of the Council to discuss the matter. The appropriate chair shall attempt to resolve the matter and if necessary refer it to the Council for action.

1-113 Attendance

This policy is intended to support the full contribution of all Council members. A Council attendance problem shall be defined as:

- A member having two un-notified absences in a row (un-notified means that the member did not call or email the Council chair or coordinator prior to the meeting.)
- A member has three notified absences in a row.
- A member who misses more than three meetings without excuse in a twelve-month period.

In the event of a Council attendance problem, the chair will contact the member to discuss the problem. The member's response will be shared by the chair with the entire Council at the next Council meeting. At that meeting, the Council will decide what action to take regarding the member's future membership.

A member who misses more than three meetings without excuse or resigns their membership shall be replaced by the Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board after a public application process and with the input of the Pinal Regional Partnership Council in accordance with A.R. S. Section 8-1162(D).

1-114 Amendments

These policies shall not be added to, amended, or repealed except at a meeting of the Council and by public vote of a majority of all voting members of the Council. Any proposed addition, deletion, or amendment shall be filed with the Regional Coordinator, in writing, at least ten days before such meeting, and it shall be the duty of the Regional Coordinator to promptly distribute a copy to each member of the Council.

Amendments to Council policy will require a two-step process to adopt: 1) the draft policy change will receive a *first reading* at a public meeting, during which Council members may discuss the draft amendment and request that staff make changes as deemed appropriate (a vote to adopt is not taken at

this stage) and 2) the draft policy change will receive a *second reading* at a subsequent public meeting during which the Council may direct staff to make further changes or may vote its adoption.